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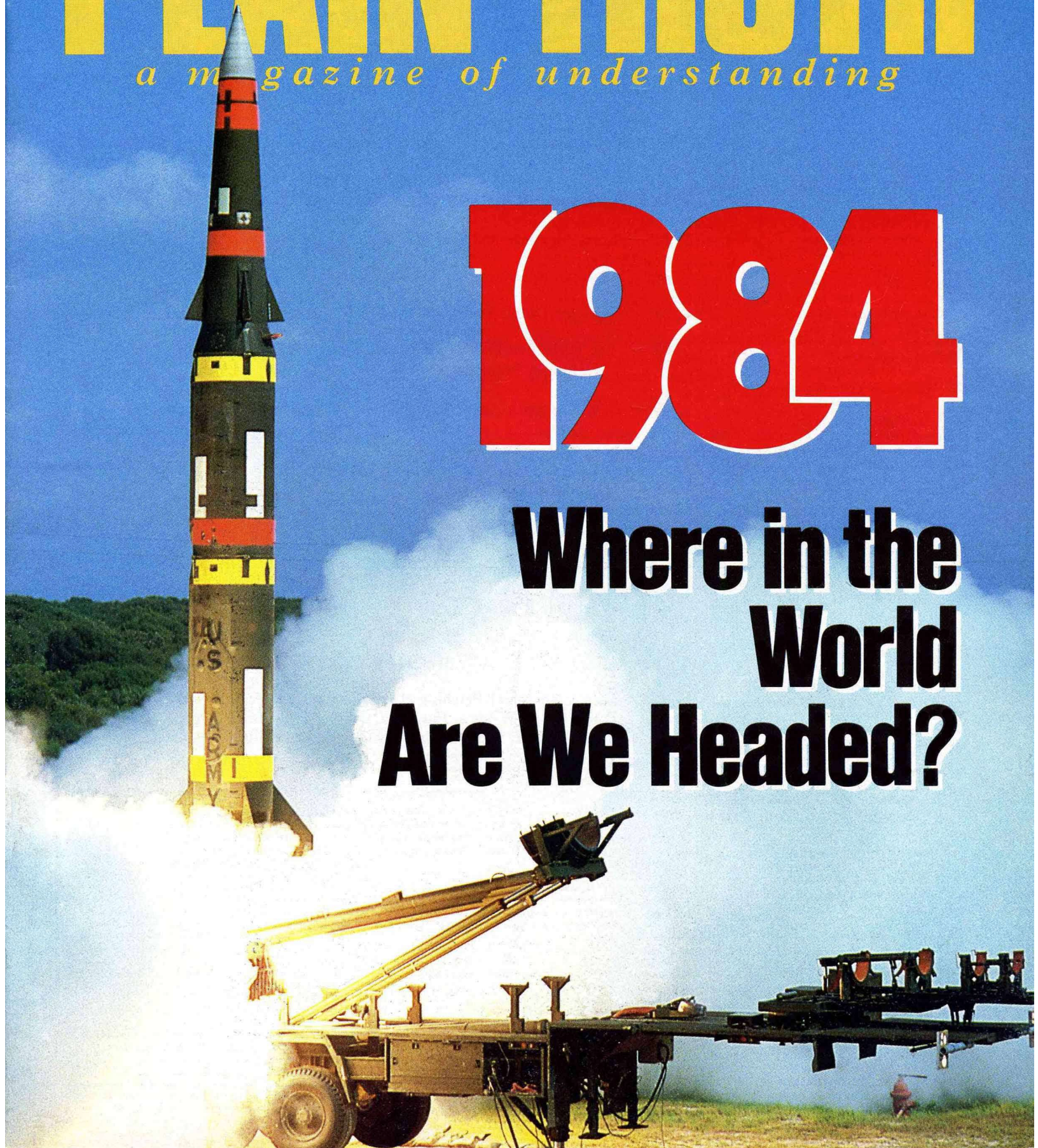
JANUARY 1984

PLAIN TRUTH

a magazine of understanding

1984

Where in the World Are We Headed?





Are People Lost Because of Adam's Sin?

“Why is it,” some people will ask, “that this whole world has to suffer so much now, because of Adam's sin?”

There's a common belief that as a result of the original so-called “fall of man”—meaning the transgression of Adam—that all people are born lost—consigned straight to an everburning torment of hell fire!

But is that true?

Let's look at this ancient event that is called the fall of man! We take a lot of things for granted—we unquestioningly assume much of what has been generally accepted and believed. But when we take out some of these things and take a good look at them, we receive some shocking surprises!

Was Adam Created Spiritually Perfect?

The common idea in the Christian-professing world is that God originally created Adam, the first man, an immortal, perfect spiritual character. The Bible expression, “God created man in his own image,” has been interpreted to mean that God made man immortal and spiritually perfect—and created of the same composition as God—that is, out of spirit. The body is interpreted to be merely the material garment the spiritual man wears—or the physical house that an immortal soul inhabits. And with this, it is commonly believed, God has completed his creation. The man was perfected, completed, immortal, perfect in character!

And then, this theory continues, along came Satan.

The devil succeeded in wrecking this perfect creation—this man that God had perfected, causing him deliberately to sin! And this sin of Adam is supposed to have somehow effected a change in the man's nature from immortality to mortality. Adam and all his descendants were now automatically consigned, upon the experience that we call death, to be plunged into the eternal torment of hell fire.

Here had stood, in the man Adam, the supreme masterpiece of all God's creation. But Satan succeeded in wrecking what God had created—thwarting God's purpose—upsetting God's plan!

And so, as this prevailing idea pictures it, God had to start all over again, and think out some new plan for repairing the damage!

It is looked upon something like an automobile manufacturer who had manufactured one very far-advanced, perfectly precisioned automobile—his supreme masterpiece—only to find that, on its first drive out of the factory, an enemy had come along and wrecked that car. The idea is that the manufacturer would have it towed back in, and would set out to repair the damage.

Is Salvation Merely to Repair the Damage?

And so in the commonly accepted idea of Christianity redemption is an effort on the part of God to repair the damage that Satan inflicted in that original sin—to make us as good as Adam was, before the so-called “fall.”

But is a badly wrecked automobile really as good, after it is repaired, as it was before the wreck? Of course not!

This common idea of a professing Christianity is not true at all! It is not the teaching of the holy Bible. It is not the Christianity of Christ, nor the 12 apostles, nor of the apostle Paul!

The general false conception is that ever since the so-called fall of Adam, God has been doing his very best to get the whole world saved—that is, to restore men to a condition as good as Adam was before the so-called fall! And, further, that there is a great competition going on between God and Satan. Satan is very cunningly resisting God, restraining and outsmarting him so that only a small fraction of the whole world's population is actually being saved.

Now this entire

(Continued on page 28)

Coming

EUROPE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST!

by Gene H. Hogberg

Trends are under way that will dramatically alter the political landscape of Europe.

SOMETIMES one startling and unexpected development can help alter the course of history.

Just such a "bolt out of the blue" occurred September 1, 1983, when a Korean civilian

sitive military zones in the Soviet Union's Far East region near Japan and Korea.

For weeks the world remained stunned over the act that terminated Korean Airlines Flight 007. Assertions from Moscow that the plane was on an American spying mission over Soviet "sacred territory" and that its fighter pilots would do the same thing again under similar circumstances further added to rising East-West tensions.

Impact on Europe

The Korean jet downing has generated considerable political fallout. It has hardened relations between Washington and Moscow. And it has virtually assured that the controversial NATO plan to install new weapons in Western Europe will go ahead as scheduled.

For a while, it appeared that the considerable public opposition to the deployment of the Pershing II and cruise missiles—NATO's new genera-

tion weapons designed to offset the Soviet Union's SS-20 intermediate missiles—might succeed in some key European countries, specifically West Germany. But the

impact of the antinuclear peace movement has been markedly reduced because of the airliner tragedy.

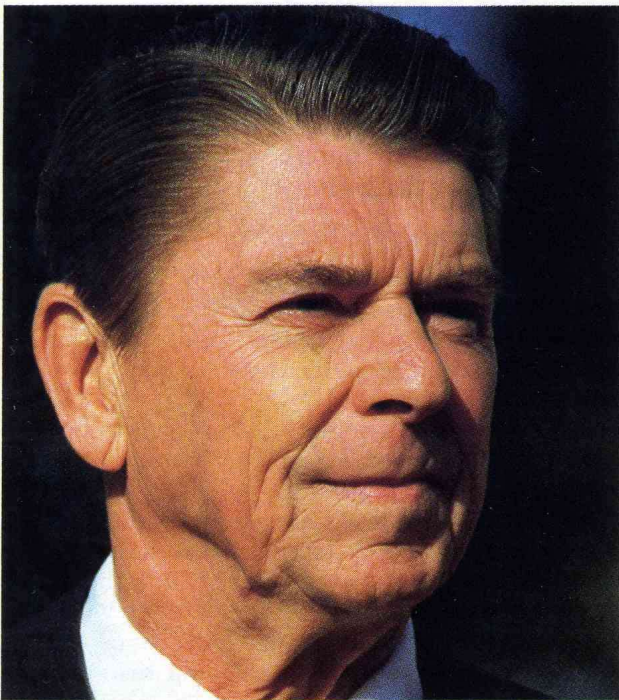
Verbal Cold War

The question of deploying intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe has generated some of the harshest exchanges between Washington and Moscow in recent years.

In September Soviet President Yuri Andropov replied blisteringly to a speech in the United Nations by U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

In his address, Mr. Reagan offered the Soviets new concessions on the "Euromissile" issue. Yet it didn't impress Mr. Andropov, who said the United States was just "prattling" about flexibility in the Geneva INF talks on the "burning issue" of reducing nuclear arsenals in Europe. The Reagan concessions were, he said, more of the same "deceptive" smoke screen to cover actual deployment (the Soviets especially dread the Pershing IIs, which could strike Soviet territory in less than 10 minutes from launch time).

Earlier, Moscow authorities implied their representatives may both walk out of the Geneva talks and take countermeasures by moving its nuclear forces "closer" to the United States and by putting SS-20 medium-range missiles on the territory of Warsaw Pact allies,



Firm U.S. policy in defense of Western Europe forces Soviets to rethink policy.

airliner, with 269 passengers aboard, was shot down by a Soviet fighter plane.

The American-made 747 jumbo jet had strayed off course over sen-

ATLAN—SYGMA

“ Thou Shalt Not! ”

by Herbert W. Armstrong

Are the Ten Commandments negative and therefore a wrong form of law?

OFTEN we hear the basic Moral Law impugned by theologians and educators as negative and therefore outdated. Its Giver is often conceived as a stern, wrathful God, who angrily says to us: “THOU SHALT NOT!” It is sometimes looked upon as undesirable for modern, advanced, enlightened man. The Ten Commandments ought to be positive, they say, not negative.

Modern humanity looks upon itself as elevated to a plane of rational thinking, and with knowledge higher than God or God's law. Of course, when we understand, God's truth is the most positive religion or philosophy there is—it eradicates fear! It is the way of faith!

But is the negative form, “Thou shalt not,” wrong for society today? Is it outmoded in building character? Should a perfect law be permissive, containing only dos and no don'ts?

Consider for a moment what is meant by true character.

Character—that is, true character—has been defined as: 1) coming to the knowledge of the true, as opposed to the false values—the right, instead of the wrong way; 2) making, of one's own free will and volition, the choice to do the right instead of the wrong; 3) the exercise of the will in actually doing the right instead of the wrong.

Character, then, once the true knowledge is acquired and the right decision made, involves self-discipline. The truly educated person is a self-disciplined person.

What, then, does this self-discipline involve?

Two things: 1) self-restraint to resist the lower impulses and pulls in human nature—to restrain the self from desires, impulses, habits or customs that are contrary to the right way; and 2) self-propulsion or determined initiative to drive the self to do those things that ought to be done. In other words, in true character in action there is the positive and the negative.

Suppose one rejects the negative as faulty and something to be discarded altogether. Suppose one applies the positive only and impels the self to do those positive

things to be done, but exercises no restraint to resist those things of habit, impulse, desire or custom of others that ought not to be done. Because human nature is what it is, the very nature in such a one will pull constantly in the wrong direction. Thus character is destroyed. That person is out of balance, living in a hopeless world of permissiveness.

We find present in nature both the positive and the negative and the principle of opposites. Electricity functions and performs its work by use of both the positive and the negative. Some elements are alkaline; some are acid. Living things and beings in this world of matter are male and female. There are sins of both omission and commission.

Frequently we read the pitiful, feeble efforts of one who fancies in ignorant egotism that he or she is wiser than God, setting forth an idea of 10 positive commandments. Ten dos, and no don'ts. And what do we find? How much character would such a list of “commandments” produce?

Just about as much character as an electric light bulb would produce light with merely the one positive wire leading into it. Just about as much character as the male

alone, without the female, could reproduce his kind. He might do a few good things, but all his good would be nullified and canceled out by the unrestrained evil he would commit.

No basic law of life, forming the basis of perfect character, could be a perfect law unless it contains, in perfect balance, both positive and negative.

Examine, now, the Ten Commandments, God's basic code, upon which all his laws, social, economic, civil and religious, hang. Here is the basis of true character:

1. "THOU SHALT have no other gods before me." This is stated in the positive form, implying we shall worship and obey the true God. In a sense, this commandment contains both the positive and negative, directing us positively, "Thou shalt," to the true God, and restraining us—the negative—from false gods.

2. "THOU SHALT NOT make unto thee any graven image, or . . . bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." This is negative, restraining from either making or worshiping any thing as a god; also restraining from either worship of, or obedience to, such a false god. To the true God man owes both worship and obedience.

Notice the principle of government in this, as in all the commands. The whole issue is one of government. The first man and woman rejected God's government, refused his rule over their lives, disobeyed four points of the basic law of his government. Christ came preaching the kingdom of God, which is the government of God, commanding humanity to repent of rejection of that government and the transgression of its laws (sin is the transgression of the law—I John 3:4).

3. "THOU SHALT NOT take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This much-abused commandment is a restraint—negative—to prevent cutting humans off from the power and benefits of the right use of God's name. This command is a negative, making possible the positive and vitally needed blessings through that name!

4. "REMEMBER the sabbath day, to keep it holy . . . the seventh day

is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." Here is another positive command—the only one God specifically commanded us to "remember," and the very one mankind insists above all upon forgetting. Is it not an indicting commentary on unrestrained human nature that this most positive of all the Commandments men flout and disobey with greatest impunity?

Again, notice the perfection—here again is a command including both positive and negative, for while it is primarily positive, yet it includes negative restraints to make possible that positive—"in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son," etc.

5. "HONOUR thy father and thy

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mother." Do you see any negative statement in this command? Here is a positive command, with a definite promise of blessing. This heads the six commands regulating our relationship with our neighbor. However, the negative opposite is implied, though not stated.

6 through 10. "THOU SHALT NOT" kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness against another, or covet. Here are the famous negatives, yet each implies the opposite positive: as, you shall love and have charitable, tolerant patience toward your neighbor, be true to your wife and respect your neighbors' property.

Here is a perfect law (Ps. 19:7). It outlines, in broad detail, our right relationship with the true God that we may have all the needed guidance, help and bless-

ings from God; and also our right relationship toward human neighbors—including parents, children, husband or wife. This law provides for every human need for our own good in a living, active, continuous relationship with the all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God.

This perfect law forms the basis of all human relationships, as well as our God-relationship. It provides the wide, basic general rules affecting every phase of life:

a) Religious, in our relationship to God;

b) Family, in our relationship to parents, children, wife or husband, and is designed to preserve the blessed sanctity and dignity of the home;

c) Next-door and personal neighbors and friends;

d) Civil relationships—here are found the very basic civil laws respecting murder, larceny (theft), adultery, perjury;

e) Economic life—honesty, not coveting others' money, goods, property or possessions, which coveting is the very root source of today's economic principle of competition;

f) Social life—such commands as those respecting adultery, false witnessing, coveting, stealing, form the foundational principle of right social attitude and relationship with neighbors.

This law, in its basic principles, defines the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13). It is the basis, in principle, for all the Bible. The entire Bible is, so far as its teaching is concerned, a magnification in specific detail of these basic principles.

This law is complete. It contains, in brief summation-principle, all the positive and negative obligations of the perfect, rightly balanced life. It is the very antithesis of permissiveness! It expresses and reflects the very character of God.

The whole law is summed in one word, *love*. It is like God, for God is love, just as his law is love. It was given in love for us, and love is the fulfilling of the law—love in action.

It is love to God, and love to neighbor. It is perfect. It is complete. □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

erroneous teaching pictures Satan as more powerful than God—he's getting the best of the competition. It represents Satan as being able to thwart God's purpose, to step in to upset God's plan and then to use his cunning and his deception and his wiles to outwit God and to prevent God from repairing the damage in the case of more than a very small fraction of the human race.

What the Bible Really Teaches

Now let's go back into the book of Genesis and see just what the Bible itself says about all this.

In Genesis 1:27, it certainly does say that God created man in his own image. But it does not say that man's composition was the same as God's—that God made man of immortal spirit!

Notice what it says about what God made man out of—Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man"—not the house that man was to enter, not the garment or cloak he would wear, but man—"of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Not that man has an immortal soul, but man became a living soul. That is, man is a living soul.

The word "soul" as it was originally inspired and written by Moses in the Hebrew language was *nephesh*; and *nephesh* means the life of animals—of animals who receive their life from the breath of air. It is the very antithesis of anything immortal. It means material life sustained by blood and the breathing of air—that's what the very word *nephesh*, translated here "soul," means.

A number of times in the first chapter of Genesis the various animals were called *nephesh* in the original inspired Hebrew—only the translators in our English version of the Bible translated it "creature" there, and "soul" when it came to man.

The word "breath"—the "breath of life" here simply means "air" or "wind." Isn't this exactly what every man breathes in and out of his nostrils? Why certainly! It was this same "breath of life" that God

caused to be breathed in and out of the nostrils of animals.

Notice the time of the Flood in Genesis 7:21-22. It is recorded that "all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life. . . ." That includes all of the animals, as well as man, in whose nostrils was the breath of life—"of all that was in the dry land, died." There we see the identical Hebrew word that is used for man—and God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life—used for breathing in and out of the nostrils of animals.

The New Testament Teaching

We read in I Corinthians 15:53, ". . . this mortal must put on immortality." The Bible says that man is dust—that man is mortal, but that man can receive immortality and that he must put on immortality at the resurrection of the just. Now turn to Ezekiel 18:4, ". . . the soul that sinneth, it shall die." It isn't immortal! And that's repeated again in the Bible—it's given twice. Sinful man shall not live forever, but die!

And, what did God say to Adam in the garden of Eden? This was before the so-called fall.

Beginning with verse 15 of Genesis 2: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:15-17).

How could that be if Adam were already immortal? If the man were perfect in character—if here were perfection, the masterpiece of all God's creation, and God had completed the creation and was through with it—would he have said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"? It wouldn't have been possible if the man were perfect—the man couldn't have fallen if he had been perfect, could he? He said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely

die"—not live forever. He didn't say, "You'll live forever in some other place or condition—in hell." No, the penalty for sin is death!

What Actually Happened

Satan came along to deceive this human, mortal man, that had been made from the dust of the ground. First, Satan called God a liar when God said that the man was mortal, subject to death if he committed sin. God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—in other words, man is mortal—subject to death. But, you read in Genesis 3:4 that the serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die." He questioned the veracity of God's word! Satan argued that the man was already immortal—an immortal soul that would not die—that he would live forever anyway. But God had said, just as you read in Romans 6:23, that the "wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life."

Satan argued that if we disobeyed God—if we commit sin—that we will be as God—like God. We'll be like gods ourselves—that is, immortal spirit. And so, somehow, ever since, most people have just assumed and gotten into their minds the idea that when Adam was created "in the image of God," he was created and made of the same composition as God—that is, composed of immortal spirit and of perfect character, and that he was created in the same character and the same nature of God originally, but that his nature changed and he fell to mortality and utter sinfulness.

In John 4:24 in the New Testament, you read that "God is a Spirit." But nowhere does the Bible say that man is a spirit, or that man is spirit. Rather, the Bible says that man is dust—"unto dust shalt thou return," says God. In I Corinthians 15 of the New Testament, it says that "man is of the earth, earthy."

What Is the Image of God?

How was Adam made in the image of God? How could he have been in the image of God if he was of different composition? I once saw a statue or image of American President Abraham Lincoln. That statue was composed of iron. I have seen images composed of wood, bronze or stone. Abraham Lincoln was

made of flesh and blood, but the statue, made in his image, was of iron.

Almighty God is made of spirit, but the man who was made in his image was made of the dust of the ground—he was made flesh and blood. God Almighty is not flesh and blood, God Almighty is spirit. Jesus Christ said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”—plain flesh and blood of the dust of the ground—“that which is born of the Spirit,” he said, “is spirit.” He said also that man can be born of the Spirit, he shall become spirit and then he will be spirit, but he is not spirit now.

Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus (see John 3) that man is mortal—man is flesh—but that he may be born again, and he must be born of God before he can become immortal. Eternal life is the gift of God.

How can man be in the image of God and still not be of God’s composition? Turn back to I Corinthians 15:45: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul”—that’s a living *nephesh*, which means material, mortal life—“the last Adam”—who was Christ—“was made a quickening spirit”—that’s an energizing or an immortal spirit. Verse 47, “The first man is of the earth, earthy”—that’s the first Adam, made of the earth. It’s the man, not the garment he wore, not the house he was in, not the body he was inside of. The “man is of the earth, earthy: the second man”—Christ—“is the Lord from heaven.”

Now in verse 49: “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Here it’s talking about composition—here it’s talking about one man being made of the dust of the ground, another being of spirit. And, we have only borne the image of the dust of the ground, but we shall bear the image of the heavenly. We are only in the form and shape of God now, but not of the radiant composition, not of the same character. We’re merely the clay model and God Almighty is the Master Potter. He made us of matter so that he, the Master Potter, could reform and shape us into the final image that it was

his purpose originally to make us.

The “fall” of man wasn’t what you have been supposing. Satan was never more powerful than God—he never frustrated God’s purpose, and he never will.

Why Man Sins

There are five senses, the senses of seeing, of hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling. When God created Adam, he put in Adam the same five senses that are in you! Let’s examine these senses and see their role in Adam’s sin—or, let’s take Eve, because the account of her sin is described in detail rather than Adam’s.

After the devil had tempted the woman, “when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes”—here are her five senses at work—“and a tree to be desired to make one wise”—there is vanity—“she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat”—that was stealing—“and she gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:6). There is the first human sin.

Do you comprehend?

The woman could see, she had the sense of sight—she saw that the forbidden tree was pleasant to the eyes. Now, she had the sense of taste. She realized that the tree tasted good—but God had forbid it. God said it is not good for her. It may look good, it might even taste good, but to eat it involved an act that was spiritual poison to her. But the woman saw otherwise. She thought otherwise in her carnal mind—her appetite was aroused—she craved the taste of it. Then, vanity was aroused in her—it was, so she believed, desired to make her wise.

And all of these desires that break the tenth commandment caused her to break the commandment against stealing, and to take the fruit that did not belong to her and that had been forbidden to her and her husband. In so doing, she obeyed Satan—she had another god before the true God, and she dishonored her only parent, so she broke the first and the fifth commandments.

Yes, sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4)—and God’s law was broken in four distinct places in that first sin in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were originally created with

the same five senses, with the same desires and appetites that you and I have today.

Now when the first man and woman yielded to those appetites and desires—that God had originally created in them—and transgressed God’s law, committing the first sin, then what happened? Did they then fall from immortality and become mortal all of a sudden? That is ridiculous!

Notice what happened. Genesis 3:16-17: “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. . . . and unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life”—there was a curse on the ground, but not any change in the physical composition of the man.

Notice, “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us”—like God—“to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever”—lest he gain eternal life, an immortal life that was offered as God’s gift in the garden of Eden—“therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life”—lest man go back and become immortal.

No, the man was not immortal. He had the opportunity of becoming immortal but he spurned it—he turned it down.

A Resurrection for All!

Notice I Corinthians 15:22: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”—the same “all” that die in Adam. Why? Simply because Adam was originally made mortal—made of the dust, composed of flesh and blood—of matter, not of spirit. Does this say that because *Adam fell* all die? No, most certainly not. But, as in Adam all die—that’s speaking of this first death—so after that, a resurrection. The wages of sin is not just this

first death that people die. The wages of sin is an eternal death.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”—that’s the good, bad, and indifferent—all people—sinners and saved alike. (See Revelation 20:5, first sentence.) The first death is not the ultimate penalty of sin! The final penalty of sin is the second death (Rev. 20:6), from which there will never be a resurrection—it is eternal punishment. Death is that punishment, forever—eternally.

We were born from our parents, and so on back to Adam who was created mortal—formed of the dust—composed of flesh and blood. In Adam—as long as we are his children—born of him—we all die this first death. But in Christ, all who are not in the first resurrection will be made alive by another resurrection to mortal life in which they will have their first calling from God to understand his truth and come to know the way to eternal life (compare Revelation 20:5, 12 and I Corinthians 15:40 with Luke 11:31-32 and Ezekiel 16:55).

In Christ we can be born again and have immortal life so that we never can die. That comes through the first resurrection.

Notice Romans 5:12—“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”—the real death penalty—the second death—passes on you, because you have sinned—because all have sinned, and NOT BECAUSE of Adam’s sin.

Notice, sin entered this world by one man—sin is the transgression of God’s spiritual law. Adam was a mortal—flesh and blood—human. If he had been perfect, he would not have sinned. He had the senses of sight, of hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling. God had put those senses in him. God talked to him—preached a sermon to him—told him that the wages of sin would be death. If he obeyed God and resisted Satan, if he partook of the tree of life, symbolizing the Holy Spirit of God, and fulfilled God’s law, then he could have had the gift of eternal life.

But Adam rejected that. Adam sinned. He never received the precious gift of eternal life. He was driven out of the garden of Eden

lest he received it, and so this first death passed upon all men.

Here’s where this first death came from; but the penalty of sin—eternal death—did not come because of Adam’s sin. That penalty is passed upon all men because that all have sinned—because we have sinned, not merely because of Adam’s sin.

We Bring the Penalty on Ourselves

No, it says in plain language that the death penalty for sin has passed upon all men because that all have sinned. The death penalty is passed upon you; it is passed upon everyone of us because we have sinned—because we have lived the wrong way and have not turned to God. The Scripture does not say that the penalty of Adam’s sin is eternal death for you and for me—but the penalty for your sin, of my sin, of our sins, is death!

But God so loved this world that he gave his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but should have the gift of everlasting life (John 3:16).

The way is to repent—to repent of sin—and acknowledge Jesus Christ as personal savior. Then the promise is, we shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And then, if we grow in grace and in knowledge—if we overcome, overcome the world, overcome ourselves and our own natures, if we endure until the end—then we shall be made immortal—we shall be born into the very family of God at last.

Oh, what a great wonderful and all-wise purpose God has in making man as he did. How we will praise him for it when finally we understand! □

Your Awesome Future

How Religion Deceives You

No religion has revealed it—religion has, in fact, kept it from you! The most important dimension in knowledge concerns a stupendous human potential. But that message, brought to earth by Jesus Christ, was suppressed in the first century. Our booklet offers the truth. You may have a free copy by mailing the envelope or writing our office nearest you.

